

STATINTL

CPYRGHT

CPYRGHT

Tofte Sues Four in CIA For \$25,000 Over Letter

By WILLIAM BASHAM

Star Staff Writer

Hans V. Tofte, fired from the Central Intelligence Agency in September, has filed a \$25,000 damage suit against CIA head Richard Helms and three others, claiming they took a letter worth that amount from his Georgetown home last July.

The CIA terminated Tofte's employment after fellow agents entered his home on July 24 and seized classified CIA documents. One of the agents, Kenneth R. Slocum, according to the CIA, visited the Tofte home at 1667 35th St. N.W. in answer to an advertisement putting the home up for sale or rent. The agency said Slocum spotted the secret papers when he was shown through the home.

On July 24, the CIA said, Slocum, his wife Judy and another agency employee, Charles

D. Speake, returned to the Tofte home and picked up the papers after they were admitted by Tofte's mother-in-law. Tofte was not at home.

In the two-page suit filed yesterday in U.S. District Court under the heading, "Complaint of a Purloined Letter," Tofte's attorney, Byron N. Scott claimed that Helms, the Slocums and Speake "singly and in concert, according to a preconceived and approved plan, did unlawfully enter . . . and thereupon took therefrom a letter belonging to and in the possession of the plaintiff to the value of \$25,000 and carried away the same and converted and disposed of it to their own use."

Scott pointed out that the suit is filed against the four defendants as private individuals—not in their official capacities.

The United States is not named as a defendant.

Scott claimed the letter was written by Helms and sent to Tofte in the mid-1950s. Helms, then involved in the agency's covert operations, asked Tofte in the letter to return to the

CIA from a private printing business in Mason City, Iowa, according to Scott. He said the Helms letter indicated the agency needed Tofte and that it had urged him to stay with the CIA for the rest of his career.

After the unexpected visit from the Slocums and Speake, Tofte informed police of the incident. Mrs. Tofte reported that some \$19,000 in jewelry had disappeared and has not been found. When notified of his firing in September, the 55-year-old Tofte was earning \$25,000 a year.

A board of inquiry reportedly found that publicity given to the incident had damaged Tofte's future value to the agency. Tofte

explained that he had taken the documents home to develop a plan that would improve the efficiency of the CIA. He claimed earlier that the agency had acted "in a manner that is beyond the law of the land."

Tofte, who now lives at 2362 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., has been involved in intelligence work since first operating with the Danish underground in World War II. His duties with the CIA never have been revealed.

Scott said some letters apparently picked up during the visit by the Slocums and Speake last July have been returned to Tofte.